

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U. S. A.

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IN REFUTATION

by W. M. Burns

In the May 1947 issue of Roundup in the "Newsy News" column is the statement that I am all wrong when I stated in an article of mine that Col. Prentice Ingraham was the real author of Beadles Half Dime Library #191-194.

In this statement, Brother Cummings gives me "the merry Ha-Ha", suggesting that when I wrote the article that I had been drinking something stronger than soda pop. I must remind Brother Cummings that there are two sides to every story, or argument, and that it is poor policy to use "snap" judgement before hearing the other parties side of the story.

Regardless of what Bro. Steinmetz says about knowing Col. Ingraham and Capt. Alfred B. Taylor personally, and that he knows that Ingraham never wrote the two tales under the name of Taylor, "for if he had, Taylor would have tanned his hide," this is not the slightest evidence or proof whatever that I am wrong.

What proof can Mr. Steinmetts offer other than his personal opinion that I am wrong?

Among Beadle collectors it is pretty much an established fact that Ingraham wrote extensively under the pen names of "Texas Jack," "Dr. Frank Powell," "J. B. Omahundro," "Buffalo Bill," etc. In fact wrote nearly all the tales ascribed to "Buffalo Bill" except a very few that were written by Major John Burke, one time press agent for Cody.

Ingraham, like Buntline, roamed the West for material for his stories, and

also like Buntline met and became friends with (at this time) famous western characters. He must have obtained their full consent to write novels about, and around them, using their names as authors instead of his own, as I never heard that any of these men ever "tanned his hide" for doing so. Please remember that in this era all these famous characters were living men and it only fed their vanity to have some Eastern author write tales of "derring-do" and use their names as author. Ingraham did not care. He got his pay from Beadle as the real writer, while the "famous scout" got his credit as the author from an often gullible public.

It was only many years later that dime novel students discovered the fact that Ingraham was really the "man behind the gun." Now is it not logically possible, even probable, that Ingraham used Taylor's name likewise?

For over 45 years, man and boy, I have been an avid reader of dime novels and for nearly 20 years a collector of them. Early in my collecting days I started to specialize in Beadles.

Since early youth I have always been a lover of the tales of Col. Ingraham and in over 19 years of collecting I have made a special study of the style and type of writing of Col. Ingraham. He has a style of writing and an expression quite unlike other writers. So when several years ago when I thought I could "spot" an Ingraham tale under any pen name, I suddenly got in these two Half Dimes in question. On reading them I at once concluded that they were really Ingraham tales. So I at once wrote my

good friend, the late Charles Jonas asking his opinion as to authorship. His reply was, "You are absolutely right Bill, as Ingraham did write both these tales," or words to that effect. Now you old time members who knew Jonas and were friends with him, knew that up to the time of his long illness he was one of the country's best authorities on Beadles, Beadle authors and their various pen names. He had collected Beadle items as a hobby man and boy for nearly 50 years. And as part of his hobby in all these years searched and unearthed many facts relative to Beadle authors and their various pen names. However during his twenty-odd years as a member of H. H. B. he could never be persuaded to write any articles from his huge fund of knowledge. (Bro. Cummings can vouch for this statement.) However to any of his friends that sought knowledge on any subject pertaining to Beadles he was really a whole fountain of knowledge, freely given with full permission to use such knowledge as they saw fit. I never, in all the years I knew Jonas, knew him to make an error in any statement that he ever made concerning any Beadle item, or its author.

Such articles as I have written in the past around Beadles were to a large extent written from facts furnished me by Jonas.

Therefore, in spite of what Bro. Steinmetts and Bro. Cummings say, I am still "sticking to my guns" and still declare that to the best of my knowledge and judgment, Col. Ingraham and not Capt. Taylor wrote the two tales in question.

Of course everyone is entitled to his own opinion. I respect the opinion of Bro. Steinmetts and Bro. Cummings and I leave it to other readers of this article, and the one attacked, to form their own opinion. But I do consider it poor policy for Bro. Cummings to virtually tell a writer of articles for Roundup that he is making false statements in his articles and that he was very probably under the influence of strong drink when writing them. And this on the statement of one man, without previously consulting the author as to his veracity.

In closing wish to state that in Millers "Dime Novel Authors" among the

various pen names listed as Ingrahams is a Capt. Albert Taylor. I believe this to be a printers error and that Mr. Miller meant Capt. Alfred Taylor.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

February 9, 1947

Sent in by Charles M. Taylor

A Lot of Words

A kindly man, Upton Sinclair writes us that he hates to spoil a story—specifically, the story noted here on Jan. 26 to the effect that he once wrote a couple of unpublished Frank Merriwell books, to be used in case of emergency, which they were not. But Mr. Sinclair does go on to note an interesting and perhaps not widely known phase of his long and busy career. Thus:

At the age of 15 I began writing jokes and sketches, and from the next year on I was a professional writer. At 17 I began writing what were called half-dime novels for Street & Smith and I continued that for about four years. At the climax, I figured that I was turning out eight thousand words a day.

I began with West Point and my pen-name was Lieut. Frederick Garrison, USA. The publication was called "The Starry Flag Weekly." I wrote all of these so far as I know. After I had got going well the man who was writing stories called "The True Blue Library," dealing with Annapolis, was promoted and I took over his job also.

After continuing this double job for a year or two both my heroes were moved to Cuba and in addition I took on the writing of some volumes called "The Columbia Library." I think that was a monthly or semi-monthly. When I got through with all this I amused myself by figuring up and deciding that I had published a volume of material equal to the works of Walter Scott.

But, as it turns out, Burt L. Standish did have a stand-in; he was John H. Whitson, a reverend sir from Massachusetts, and, we are told, a crack-jack facsimile of the Frank Merriwell he turned out.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

We have some bad news this trip, for we've lost three more of our brotherhood members, namely—Benjamin Hallett of Marstons Mills, Mass. died Jan. 25th, age 80 years old and Joseph K. Gantner of Boonville, Mo., died April 17th of a heart attack.

Charles H. Austin, 153 Main St., East Rockaway, N. Y., died May 15th and Thomas W. Baker, 2804 Bayonne Ave., Baltimore 14, Md. died April 3rd. All a fine lot of fellows too, and we are going to miss them very much. God bless them always.

George French of Bloomfield, N. J., will be hiking up to Kezar Falls, Maine the 4th of June.

E. Dudley Evans, 441 Essex Street, Lynnfield Centre, Mass., has been very sick, and had a gland operation, but is beginning to come around, although slowly. Glad to hear you are now improving.

Notice Bull Burns article "In Refutation" on front page. Remember in last issue, I asked Bill what he had been drinking up there, well, it wasn't Bill, but I guess I'm the one that must have had something stronger than soda pop. My records show Bill is right in saying Col. Prentiss Ingraham was the author of these two stories Nos. 191 and 194 of Beadles Half Dime Library. That's what I get for not attending to business. I'm glad Bill ripped me up the back, as I had it coming to me. I have no excuse for being so shiftless and neglectful, and I want to apologize for my ac-

tions Bill, I'm sorry. When I go up your way again, you can boot me all over Rockland.

George Barton says one thing that was settled in his mind of which has been bothering him for a long time. When he was about 8 years old, maybe 9, he began to take in two story papers, Happy Days, and the other one he never was certain of until now, and that was Good News. After he had been reading them a month, his dad confiscated them, and burned them up. All he remembered about the second paper was that he was entranced by a story about the Crusades. In this paper there were several historical stories by Alfred Armitage, author of Crusader and Saracen—that was the story in Good News. George says he would like to get numbers between 200 and 292 that he needs.

John E. Clark, 1010 Laurel Ave., Bridgeport, Conn. says while over in London, when he was in the U. S. Navy, he noted a good many boys books and thought some of the readers and club members would be interested. John picked up an issue of Martin Speed, Detective. The title was "The Concert Party Murders," by John Norman. Price 4d (8c). Consists of 32 double column pages, and published by Gerald G. Swan, Ltd., London, England.

Expect two new Happy Hours Bro. Reproductions in soon—They are Bob Brooks Library No. 27. Train Wreckers Betrayed, or Bob Brooks in Kansas and Frank Reade Library No. 1. Frank Reade Jr. and His New Steam Man, or the Young Inventors trip to the Far West. Price \$1.00 each.

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172. E. Dudley Evans, 441 Essex St., Lynnfield Centre, Mass.
204. William S. Hillyer, 341 87th St., Brooklyn 29, N. Y.
206. Mrs. Mildred Koch (Doll Collector), 263 Puritan Ave., Forest Hills, L. I., N. Y.

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230. Harry H. Jewell, Box 60, Bristol, Ill.

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"The Life and Times of Jesse James" Blue Ribbon reprint of above, 1939. (by Robertus Love)

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- #2. Morrisons Sensational Series #46. Frank James on the Trail. No authors name listed.
- #3. Boys Star Library #344. Jack Wright and His Electric Stage; or, Leagued Against the James Boys. By Nname.
- #4. Wide Awake Library #553. Frank Reade and His Steam Horse. By Nname.
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Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

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Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.